



National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

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1 **NOTE: This is a recommendation by the GMITechnical Committee of the NCUTCD.**
2 **It is being distributed to the National Committee sponsoring organizations for**
3 **review and is subject to revision. This draft recommendation is not a revision to**
4 **the MUTCD and does not constitute official standards, guidance, or options. No**
5 **proposed revision to the MUTCD is effective unless and until approved by FHWA**
6 **through an Interim Approval or through the Federal rulemaking process.**

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8 **TECHNICAL COMMITTEE:** Guide/Motorist Information (GMI)

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10 **TOPIC:** Changeable Message Signs (CMS)

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12 **STATUS/DATE OF ACTION:**

13 **TC Drafts:** 06/26/2014

14 **TC Approval:** 06/27/2014

15 **Transmitted to Sponsors:** 00/00/0000

16 **Council Approval:** 06/28/2014

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18 **ORIGIN OF REQUEST:** John Hansen

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20 **AFFECTED SECTIONS OF MUTCD:** FHWA, 2016 MUTCD Concept Only – Limited
21 Distribution for GMI Review, Section 2L.02,
22 Page 2 of 6, lines 6-12, 29-30, 35-37 and 42-
23 43

24
25 **SUMMARY:**

26 The FHWA Fall 2013 Compilation of Draft Technical Updates/ Considerations proposed
27 additional restrictions on Changeable Message Sign (CMS) use. The proposed
28 restrictions affect current programs and practices. GMI recommends that the proposed
29 FHWA restrictions in Section 2BA.02 be deleted until regulatory and programmatic
30 conflicts with existing practices are resolved.

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32 **DISCUSSION**

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34 The FHWA text modifications that propose additional restrictions on CMS may
35 adversely affect mandated CMS use for on-going, mandatory participation, federal and
36 state programs such as Amber Alerts, Silver Alerts, National Weather Service alerts or
37 interim Safety Campaign efforts. GMI recommends that the additional restrictions be
38 deleted and that FHWA only add the restrictions to the MUTCD after a complete review
39 of potential regulatory and programmatic conflicts has been completed.

RECOMMENDED MUTCD PROVISIONS/ REVISIONS

Note: FHWA proposed changes to the MUTCD are shown with text additions in underline blue and deleted text is shown in ~~strikethrough red~~. Proposed changes are shown with additions in underline green and deletions in ~~underline strikethrough red~~.

~~Section 2L.02~~ Section 2BA.02 Applications of Changeable Message Signs

Support:

Changeable message signs have a large number of applications including, but not limited to, the following:

- A. Incident management and routed diversion
- B. Warning of adverse weather conditions
- C. Special event applications associated with traffic control or conditions
- ~~D. Control at crossing situations~~ Undefined and confusing
- E. Lane, ramp, and roadway control
- F. Price or other types of managed lanes
- G. Travel times
- H. Warning situations
- I. Traffic regulations
- J. Speed control
- K. Destination guidance

Option:

Changeable message signs may be used by State and local highway agencies to display short-term safety messages as a supporting element of a broader safety campaign, transportation-related messages, emergency homeland security messages, and America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response (AMBER) alert messages.

Standard:

Other types of "alert" messages that are unrelated to traffic or travel conditions shall not be displayed on CMS. AMBER alerts, when displayed, shall not pre-empt messages related to traffic or travel conditions. AMBER alert messages shall be kept as brief as possible and display only that information which will direct road users to another source, such as highway advisory radio, for detailed information about the alert. Other information, such as descriptions of persons, vehicles, or license plate numbers, shall not be displayed with an AMBER alert message on a CMS.

Guidance:

State and local highway agencies should develop and establish a policy regarding the display of the types of messages provided in Paragraph 2. When changeable message signs are used at multiple locations to address a specific situation, the message displays should be consistent along the roadway corridor and adjacent corridors, which might necessitate coordination among different operating agencies.

Support:

Examples of safety campaigns supporting messages include "SEATBELT BUCKLED?" and "DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE." Examples of transportation-related messages include "STADIUM EVENTS SUNDAY, EXPECT DELAYS NOON TO 4 PM" and "OZONE ALERT CODERED—USE TRANSIT."

Guidance:

When a CMS is used to display a safety or ~~transportation~~ transportation- related message, the message should be simple, brief, legible, and clear. A CMS should not be used to display a safety

1 or transportation-
2 related message if doing so would adversely affect respect for the sign. "CONGESTION AHEAD" or other overly si
3 mplistic or vague messages should not be displayed alone. These messages should be supplemented with a message
4 on the location or distance to the congestion or incident, delay and travel time, alternative route, or other similar mes
5 sages.

6 When displayed, safety messages should be simple and direct, emphasizing the applicable
7 regulation or traffic condition information. Slogan-type messages and the display of highway statistics
8 should be avoided.

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10 **Standard:**

11 ~~When a CMS is used to display a safety, transportation-~~
12 ~~related, emergency, homeland security, or AMBER alert message, the display~~ The format of CMS displays sh
13 all not be of a type that could be considered similar to advertising displays.

14 Safety messages shall not be displayed on CMS unless they are part of an active, coordinated
15 safety campaign that uses other media forms as the primary means of outreach and, where
16 regulations apply, includes coordinated enforcement efforts.

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18 Support:

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20 Section 2B.13 contains information regarding the design of changeable message signs that are used to displ
21 ay variable speed limits that change based on ambient or operational conditions, or that display the speed at which ap
22 proaching drivers are traveling.

23 Section 2H.03 contains information regarding the design of changeable message signs that are
24 used to display variable speeds for traffic signal progression on the Traffic Signal Speed (H-1) sign.

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27 **TECHNICAL COMMITTEE VOTE:**

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For: 19

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Opposed: 0

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Abstentions: 0

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